GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(The National Geographic Society is a scientific and educational Society, wholly altruistic, incorporated under the Federal law as a non-commercial institution for the increase of geographic knowledge and its popular diffusion.)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

NOTE TO TEACHERS.—Because so many schools preserve copies of the Geographic News Bulletins, teachers will find the INDEX to VOLUME IV, contained in this issue, of use. The Index covers 30 issues, from March 9, 1925, through the current number, March 1, 1926. The issuance of the Bulletins is a part of the altruistic, educational work of the National Geographic Society. Teachers wishing to give their colleagues the opportunity of using the bulletins, beginning with the new volume, will find a blank for that purpose following Bulletin No. 1.

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(See Bulletin No. 1)

HOW TO OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

The Geographic News Bulletins are published weekly throughout the school year (thirty issues) and will be mailed to teachers for one year upon receipt of 25 cents (in stamps or money order). Entered as second-class matter, January 27, 1922, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized February 9, 1922.

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Asir: Which May Be Swallowed Up

ASIR is caught between the pincers of the two major powers of western Arabia, Hejaz and Yemen. As an independent principality Asir will probably be squeezed out of existence, observers predict.

Great Britain has recognized by treaty the spreading power of Ibn Saud, former ruler of the interior territory of Nejd, who has conquered Mecca, Medina, Jidda and all the rest of Hejaz. (See Bulletin No. 2, February 1, 1926.) This chieftain has also taken a portion of Asir lying to the south. Asir is ruled by Emir Sayyid of the Idrisi tribe. Geography students cannot be held at fault if they do not include the Emir's "home town," Sabiyah, in listing world capitals, because Asir itself is practically unknown.

Asir is on the Arabian shore of the same Red Sea that we are told the children of Israel crossed dry-shod and has existed there with little change probably from the time of that interesting event. Phoenicians and Venetians and Portuguese have coasted alongside its barren, hot sands. Since the Suez Canal was constructed palatial steamers with the last word in equipment and appointments have passed in a continual procession in sight of its coral reefs and beaches and mountains. And yet until 1917 practically nothing whatever was known of the region, and even now the world's knowledge of it is scant.

Turks Ruled But Did Not Explore

As in most other parts of Arabia, the people of Asir are Mohammedans, and fanatical Mohammedans at that. Travelers are not welcome, especially are "Christian dogs" not wanted. But the intolerance of the people of Asir is not reserved for Christians alone. The Turks, who are fellow Moslems and who were in addition representatives of the Caliph, made little headway in Asir. It was a part of the Turkish Empire as was most of the remainder of Arabia; but the people never surrendered their independence. Turkish garrisons held Kanfuda and Jisan, little ports, and Ibl, an inland station; but large districts of Asir's 30,000 or 40,000 square miles of territory were never even explored by the Turks.

Along the Red Sea in Asir is a strip of lowlands 20 to 30 miles wide, known as the "tehama," barren, hot and fever-ridden. In appearance it is not unlike the unlovely Pacific coast of Mexico's Lower California. Even in April the thermometer registers as high as 107° in the shade in the "tehama," and in midsummer it is almost as hot as in America's famous Death Valley.

Even Emir's Rule Not Absolute

The inner edge of the "tehama" is marked by low mountains, some 2,000 feet high. Farther inland are the country's highest peaks, rising to 6,000 and even 8,000 feet. Still farther inland the mountains give way to the high plateau that extends into central Arabia.

In Asir's higher mountains, according to the meager word-of-mouth reports of natives, is a land the direct opposite of the unlovely "tehama." The rainfall in the mountains is said to be considerable and its valleys are regions of running water, trees, gardens, fields and orchards. None of the streams reaches the sea, all being swallowed up by the desert or used up by irrigation.

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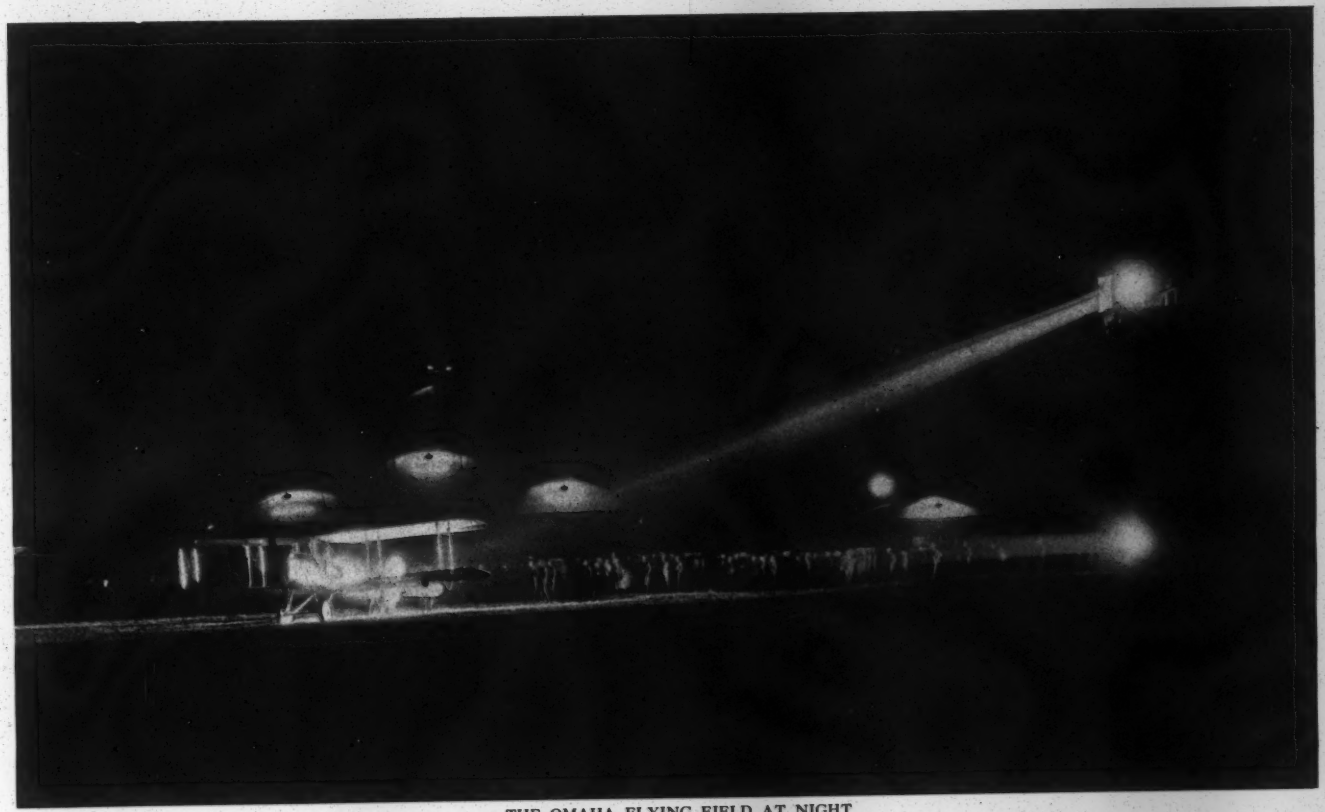

THE OMAHA FLYING FIELD AT NIGHT

Pilots and planes are changed six times en route between New York and San Francisco; at Cleveland, Chicago, Omaha, Cheyenne, Salt Lake City, and Reno. The average flight for each pilot is 381 miles. The longest leg is between Omaha and Cheyenne, 476 miles; the shortest is between Reno and San Francisco, 184 miles, where the pilots reach an altitude of from 10,000 to 15,000 feet above sea level while crossing the Sierra Nevada, known in Air Mail parlance as "The Hump" (see Bulletin No. 5).

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King Cod Gets Some Allies in Newfoundland

KING Cod in Newfoundland is gathering an industrial court around him which is bringing prosperity to this easternmost extension of the North American continent. Wood pulp is the most conspicuous figure of the industrial allies of the cod by virtue of the erection of several huge pulp and paper mills. St. John's, the capital, points proudly also to a new grain elevator, a new dry dock and a new $1,000,000 hotel under construction.

Newfoundland can make out a good case for half of Boston's title, "the home of the bean and the cod." If ever a place owed a debt to fish and that fish, cod, it is this seagirt 42,000 square miles of North America. The word fish means cod to a Newfoundlander. All other marine inhabitants take proper names but are scarcely important enough to merit the name fish.

One native was asked if there were any fish in a certain stream. "No," he replied, "nothing but trout."

Cabot Bailed Cod With Baskets

John Cabot, when he touched Newfoundland five years after Columbus landed in the West Indies, reported to the English king that cod were so thick they could be bailed out of the sea with weighted hampers. Even in modern times they are said to have been so numerous dogs would rush into the water and drag them ashore. So thoroughly is Newfoundland reconciled to cod that dogs, cows and bears eat them and when the Newfoundlander is not eating cod he consumes vegetables and crops grown on ground *fertilized* with cod.

Cod, however, have this in common with certain other fish; they are sticklers for bait. It is the bait question, chiefly, which gives Newfoundland the reputation of being the cause of many near-wars. Europe's fishermen began sailing to the banks to fish off Newfoundland the year after Cabot planted the flags of England and Venice side by side. Contention over fishing rights raged with little intermission until 1910, when the Hague court decided against a plea of the United States.

Herring, caplin and squid successively serve for cod bait as the season advances. Squid is highly considered as bait but commands such a high price that it is used chiefly in midsummer when the herring and caplin catch falls off. Squid is a member of the cuttlefish family, whose most widely heralded brother is the octopus. When attacked it emits an inky fluid to deceive its pursuers. Newfoundland fishermen find squid chiefly in the fiords of the island's southwest coast.

Caught with Baitless Hook

The squid is one of the few representatives of fresh or salt water fish caught with a baitless hook. "Jigging," natives call the process of wiggling the hook up and down in the water until the squid, victim of its own curiosity, rises to inspect the new toy and gets a prong in one of its ten legs.

For years fishermen of many nations, England, France, Spain and Portugal, sailed to the banks to catch cod and dry it on the shores of Newfoundland. Even before America was discovered cod was a staple in Europe where it was known as stockfish. The apparent value of the new fisheries therefore led

UMI

Even the Emir of Asir, nominal lord of the realm, is without authority in much of his wild country. He holds securely only the "tehama," the lower mountains, and a portion of the highest region. In much of the highlands the inhabitants do not acknowledge his authority. This is especially true of the nomads on the edge of the great central desert.

Capital is a Village of Huts

When Italy was at war with Turkey in 1911-12 she gave money to the Emir of Asir who was glad enough to make active his slumbering enmity toward Turkey. During the World War the Emir was one of the numerous Arab chieftains who nominally joined the Allies against the Central Powers. He received supplies from Great Britain but accomplished little, never even dislodging the few Turkish garrisons in Asir.

Sabiyah, the capital of Asir, is in the lower highlands just outside the "tehama." It is described by a British Indian medical officer who visited it during the World War as "a village of huts."

Bulletin No. 1, March 1, 1926.

For Further Reading

Teachers who wish to use this bulletin for project or reading assignment will find allied subject matter and illustrations in the following National Geographic Magazine articles: **Nejd:** "The Rise of the New Arab Nation." By Frederick Simpich. November, 1919, pp. 369–392. **Mecca:** "The Most Extraordinary City in the World." By Shaoching H. Chuan, M.D. October, 1912, 60 illustrations, pp. 959–995. "One Thousand Miles of Railway Built for Pilgrims and not for Dividends." By Colonel F. R. Maunsell. February, 1909, 12 illustrations, pp. 156–172. **Hejaz:** "A Visit to Three Arab Kingdoms." By Junius B. Wood. May, 1923, 30 illustrations, pp. 535–568.

Form for Bulletin Requests

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Two Englishmen Scale Kilimanjaro, Highest African Peak

TWO Englishmen from Cape Town have recently scaled Kilimanjaro Mountain in Tanganyika Territory. The feat of attaining the top-most peak had been accomplished by one other party consisting of two Germans, but the Cape Town men are the first Englishmen to ascend the highest pinnacle of this English-owned volcano. Other climbers have reached the crater.

Although Africa spreads itself to both temperate zones, by whim of geography its only notable snow peaks are under the sun's most direct glare and, of its "high spots" near the Equator, Kilimanjaro is chief.

Kilimanjaro was unknown to the world a century ago, and unscaled until 1889, but now a railway from Mombasa approaches its flanks. In its way it affords Africa claim to one of the greatest mountains on the face of the earth. Everest, at 29,002 altitude, is almost 10,000 feet higher than Kilimanjaro; there are even peaks having similar volcanic origin rising higher in South and Central America, but all of these great ones with the possible exception of Mt. McKinley, rise on the backs of their neighbors. Kilimanjaro stands alone in the heat-scorched, windswept plain. Without even the company of a mountain ridge it rises solitary from a plateau to the snowcapped majesty of 19,819 feet.

Higher than Blanc or Whitney

Europe is proud of its Alps and Pyrenees and the United States considers the Rockies mighty mountains, yet Kilimanjaro is nearly a mile higher than Mt. Whitney, tallest peak in the United States. It is almost 4,000 feet higher than Mt. Blanc, Europe's leading summit. Kilimanjaro has for company on the Equator, Mt. Kenya, just over the Tanganyika border, giving its name to Kenya Colony and "the Mountains of the Moon," (officially Ruwenzori) in Uganda. All feed the White Nile with water for Egypt.

Natives inhabiting the slopes of Kilimanjaro have the legend that the mountain has a silver peak. To tribes who have never seen snow, this seemed the most satisfactory explanation for the gleaming white cap. They associated it with their gods and the first white men to explore it had great difficulty satisfying the natives that they would not drive away Rayli, the god in the form of a giant cow inhabiting the mountain's high plains.

The mountain is a small world in itself, or more properly half a world. The snow cap is its polar cap; the high, cold ridges, without vegetation, are like Labrador or the Alaskan steppe, but instead of harboring reindeer, they support flocks of eland. The mountain is a game preserve so the flocks thrive.

Scotch Highlands of Africa

Next comes a belt of heather similar to that of the Scotch Highlands. Then as the elevation drops, the region of heavy precipitation appears and with it the rain-forest, almost constantly swathed in mist. This jungle thins to the ordinary forest and then dwindles to the mountain's "temperate zone" where the tribesmen live. It is estimated 125,000 people now have their homes on the slopes of Kilimanjaro and they are counted by some explorers among the most intelligent and progressive natives of Africa.

The Chagga and other tribes even employ irrigation to grow their crops of

England to proclaim her right to the island in 1583. Colonization was early planned and on one attempt a company for which Sir Francis Bacon was either press agent or promotion manager, pushed the idea. Bacon's rosy pictures did not insure success. The venture failed partly because the "fishing admirals" who monopolized the business did not wish the island colonized. These daring profiteers are said to have obtained an order to burn houses of fishermen.

English, Irish and Scotch finally did come to the island and their descendants make up the great majority of the 259,000 population.

The Fight For Fishing Rights

The international struggle for fisheries control finally narrowed to England, France and the United States. France once made an effort to capture St. John's, the principal port and capital, and many diplomatic quarrels became heated to the flash-point. Through possession of the tiny islands, St. Pierre and Miquelon, France hoped to hold her trade, but an embargo on bait from Newfoundland and other coastal territory enforced to the letter has nearly wiped the Breton fishing boats off the banks.

Innumerable lakes are the most notable features of inland Newfoundland. One sportsman reports he fished in forty different lakes within a half-mile of one camp. They lie among old rock formations and cover one-third of the entire island. Newfoundland's climate is tempered greatly by the ocean but usually snow is on the ground until late spring and winter clothes are often worn through June. Snow remains on the 2,000-foot ridge, which bears the picturesque name, "Topsails," until August.

Paper For England's Newspapers

Of the exports, which totaled more than $20,000,000 in a recent year, "hard" or dried cod represented $13,000,000. This product goes to England, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, the United States and the West Indies. In warm climates it is a food which will not spoil and yet is relatively cheap. Much of the paper for some of England's greatest newspapers comes from Newfoundland where it is manufactured in a plant built by the late Lord Northcliffe. Iron ore, seal and cod oil are other major products.

Contrary to the snap judgment of most Americans neither Newfoundland nor rocky Labrador, are parts of the Dominion of Canada. Despite the fact that most maps color Newfoundland and Canada as if they were one dominion, the first discovered mainland bit of North America is as rigidly independent of the Maple Leaf member of the Commonwealth as Fiji or New Zealand is of Australia.

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bananas, sweet potatoes and grains. Sometimes they merely divert a mountain stream but frequently more than ordinary engineering skill is used to bring water through tubes or channels considerable distances. The heavy forest belt, not Kilimanjaro's glaciers, supplies most of the irrigation water. Like a vast sponge, the rain-forest drinks up the rain and squeezes it out in springs.

Desert and Snow Limit Native Travel

Below the agricultural belt is the scorched dry plain. It is almost as impossible to get the natives to venture down to the hot plain as to get them to approach the ice-capped crater.

Elephants inhabit the thick forests of Kilimanjaro's slopes. Explorers often see their spoors on banks seemingly impossible for such huge animals to climb. One writer reports seeing marks indicating that the elephants thrust their tusks into the ground to steady themselves on a descent and that scruffed bark showed that they wound their trunks about trees to help themselves up to higher positions.

FLEET OF NATIVE CANOES IN CENTRAL AFRICA

The logs are hollowed out by fire and primitive tools, cleverly shaped, and scraped down to an inch in thickness. Playful hippopotami and rhinoceroses frequently overturn canoes by rising up under them or lunging at them from the banks. Drainage from the central massif of African mountains affords water for many navigable tributaries of the Upper Nile and Congo Rivers.

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(Ill.) Wailing Place of the Jews: Jerusalem. (Apr. 27, 1925.)
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(Ill.) A Persian Mohammedan Praying. (Jan. 11, 1926.)

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Astronomy: (Ill.) An Astronomer Going From His Work at Yerkes Observatory. (Nov. 9, 1925.)
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(Ill.) Troop Transportation in the Dolomite Alps. (Feb. 22, 1926.)
(Ill.) War-Time "Pullmans" Deluxe on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. (Feb. 22, 1926.)

Tunnels: (Ill.) Inspecting Chicago's Freight Tunnels. (Apr. 20, 1925.)
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Volcanoes: (Ill.) Mt. Katmai: Scientists Getting "Smoke" Samples at One of the Ten Thousand. (Nov. 16, 1925.)
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Water Supply: How Los Angeles Goes East for Water. (Apr. 27, 1925.)
(Ill.) View of Section of an Inverted Siphon on the Owens Valley Project. (Apr. 27, 1925.)

CLEANING FISH IN QUAINT ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

Many men spend practically their entire lives as fish cleaners. Even in so humble a trade rivalries crop out, and there are a number of claimants for the international championship in fish dressing (see Bulletin No. 2).

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(Ill.) A Bulgarian Woman Spinning as She Walks. (Jan. 11, 1926.)
(Ill.) (Eskimo Children) Me-oish-oo and Shoo-e-oing-wa Take a Sun Bath with Their Puppies on Father's Big Bearskin Rug. (Oct. 19, 1925.)
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Night Flying and Night Trains Fostered by Letter Writers

CONTRACT air mail routes connecting nearly all the large cities in the United States will start in swift succession this spring. These services will supplement the New York to San Francisco air mail operated by the Post Office Department since July 1, 1924.

The new routes represent the first important extensions of commercial aviation in the United States. The Post Office Department, therefore, receives credit for pioneering the way toward the everyday use of planes for trade purposes in this country. The government departments are so often regarded as producers only of red tape to shackle progress, that it is worth while to note that the Post Office Department has a considerable record for pioneering.

In the early days of the railway development, postal demands brought about night trains. When postal officials required that trains run after dark, trainmen were astounded that such a risky practice should be demanded. Now railroad traffic at night is almost as heavy as it is in daytime.

From Night Trains to Night Planes

A fitting sequel to this role in railroad progress came when the Post Office Department Air Mail Service in 1925 pioneered the first regular night plane service on the route between Chicago and Cheyenne, Wyoming. Later, night service was extended to include New York. Carrying forward the comparison we may expect that night airplane service of the future will be as common as Pullman car service is today.

In July, 1924, the Post Office Department began to carry mail over the entire route from coast to coast in planes. In preparation for this project eight intercoastal relay flights were made a year before. Letters bearing a San Francisco postmark of 6 a. m., August 24, were canceled at the New York Post Office at 2 p. m., the following day.

During these flights the great white airway along the night route from Chicago to Cheyenne was tested and night flying shown to be practicable. For this achievement the Air Mail Service was awarded the Collier Trophy for the second successive year.

A Lane of Light to the West

The electrical engineers provided five stations with aerial beacons aptly nicknamed "midnight suns of the Air Mail." Each beacon is a high-intensity arc searchlight, mounted on a 50-foot tower, and it revolves three times a minute.

Set at an angle of one degree, the 500,000,000 candlepower beam from each of these land lighthouses sweeps the sky just above the horizon. Pilots have sighted beacons 130 miles away on clear nights. At 100 miles the diameter of its beam is about two miles if weather conditions permit it being seen at all.

On 34 emergency landing fields along the night airway, large guiding lights have been installed. There are smaller light guides every three miles. A continuous light lane 1,900 miles long extends between New York and Cheyenne now.